

REMARKS

The present Amendment amends claims 2 and 5-13 and cancels claims 1, 3 and 4. Therefore, the present application has pending claims 2 and 5-13.

Claims 3 and 4 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Mueller (U.S. Patent No. 6,185,413); claims 1 and 8-11 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Mueller in view of Spaur (U.S. Patent No. 6,122,514); and claims 12 and 13 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Mueller. As indicated above, claims 1, 3 and 4 were canceled. Therefore, these rejections with respect to claims 1, 3 and 4 are rendered moot. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections with respect to claims 1, 3 and 4 is respectfully requested.

It should be noted that the cancellation of claims 1, 3 and 4 was not intended nor should it be considered as an agreement on Applicants part that the features recited in claims 1, 3 and 4 are taught or suggested by Mueller and Spaur or any of the other references of record whether taken individually or in combination with each other. The cancellation of claims 1, 3 and 4 was simply intended to expedite prosecution of the present application.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's indication in paragraph 9 of the Office Action that claims 2, 6 and 7 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Amendments were made to claims 2, 6 and 7 to place them in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and

any intervening claims. Therefore, claims 2, 6 and 7 are allowable as indicated by the Examiner.

With respect to the remaining claims 5 and 8-13, Applicants submit that these claims were amended to now depend directly or indirectly from one of the allowable base claims 2, 6 and 7.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants submit that claims 2 and 5-13 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of claims 2 and 5-13 is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of MATTINGLY, STANGER, MALUR & BRUNDIDGE, P.C., Deposit Account No. 50-1417 (500.42966X00).

Respectfully submitted,

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